



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2048.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Ageing in Australia, 2001

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Australia's older population on the increase: ABS

While the total Australian population increased five-fold over the last century, the number of older people increased over fifteen-fold. A new report on ageing in Australia, based on 2001 Census data, released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, shows that older people (aged 65 years and over) comprised 13% of the population in 2001, compared with 4% in 1901.

Other findings in the publication include:

- Older people were less likely to move residence than younger people. While almost two-thirds (65%) of people aged 25-34 years moved between 1996 and 2001, only one-fifth of older people moved.
- While approximately two-thirds of Australia's older people (62%) live in family households, recent trends such as low fertility, smaller families, higher incidence of childlessness and increased divorce rates have meant that the number and proportion of older people living alone has increased (from 20% in 1971 to 26% in 2001);
- Labour force participation rates for men have declined over the last few decades, while rates for women have been on the increase. In 1971, 89% of mature age men (aged 45-64 years) were participating in the labour force, decreasing to 77% in 2001, while for older men (aged 65 years and over) the rate decreased from 22% to 12%. At the same time, the rate for mature age women increased from 32% to 58%, and for older women increased slightly from 4% to 5%;
- The industry with the oldest workforce in 2001 was agriculture, forestry and fishing with a median age of 45 years, followed by education, with a median age of 43 years. Industries with the youngest median age were accommodation, cafes and restaurants (32 years) and retail trade (31 years);
- Some 41% of older people reported having completed non-school qualifications, compared to 56% of 25-34 year olds. The lower levels of completion by the older age groups reflect they had fewer opportunities as well as lower demand in the workplace for higher educational qualifications at the time they left school; and
- One in ten older people reported using a computer and 6% accessed the Internet in the week prior to the 2001 Census, compared with over half of the people aged 15-44 years. These technologies were more likely to be used by older people in rural areas than non-rural areas.

Further details can be found in **Census of Population and Housing: Ageing in Australia** (cat. no. 2048.0).

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